



2012 Politics

Higher – Paper 1

Finalised Marking Instructions

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Paper 1

Question 1

Award up to 3 marks for arguments for and up to 3 marks for arguments against the use of referenda in the UK.

For full credit candidates must make use of both sources **A** and **B**. If source **B** is not used a maximum of 4 marks may be awarded.

For

Source A

- Introducing referenda would encourage greater participation in the political system.
- Referendums would actually enhance public understanding of key political issues.
- Referendum campaigns would provide an opportunity to educate the public on the merits of opposing cases.
- Referendums in the UK have been used to settle important constitutional issues as they can provide a clear and definitive answer to a specific question.

Source B

- In all cases there have been definitive answers from the public in support of or against an issue (ie figures for Scottish devolution).

Against

Source A

- As more referenda are used then there may be increasing voter fatigue and lower participation rates.
- The use of referenda undermines the system of representative democracy as they can limit the ability of elected representatives to take action (eg California).
- The government of the day may be able to word the question presented to voters in such a way as to achieve its desired outcome.

Source B

- Turnout figures show poor participation rates. In two of the referenda, turnout was below 50%.

Credit any other relevant points.

Question 2

Award up to 14 marks from the following:

For full marks candidates must refer to all sources and say to what extent the evidence supports the statement made.

‘Opinion polls conducted in the last few days before the 2010 General Election accurately predicted the position of the major parties and their share of the vote.’

For full credit candidates must make use of both sources **C** and **D** for this part of the statement. Candidates will need to compare information from source **C** (the opinion poll predictions) with the information from source **D** (the actual position of the parties and their share of the vote) then reach a conclusion about the validity of this statement.

Source D

- The Conservatives were the largest party in terms of seats and votes.
- Labour came second in terms of votes and also a clear second based on the share of the vote.
- The Liberal Democrats were clearly in third place in terms of seats and share of the votes.

Source C

- The opinion polls accurately predicted that the Conservatives would emerge as the largest party.
- All polls were within 1-2% of the Conservative share of the vote.
- The polls therefore accurately predicted the Conservative position and share of the vote.
- Most polls did not accurately predict the position of the Labour party as only two of the five placed Labour in a clear second position.
- All polls underestimated Labour’s share of the vote – one by nearly 6%.
- All polls overestimated the share of the vote for the Liberal Democrats.
- Most incorrectly placed the Liberal Democrats either tied with Labour in second place or in one case even clearly ahead of Labour.

Credit any other relevant points.

Overall the polls did not accurately predict the positions or share of the votes for Labour and the Liberal Democrats and although they accurately predicted the winner they did not accurately predict the share of the votes and positions of the major parties.

“2010 was undoubtedly Labour’s worst performance since 1983; Labour was comprehensively defeated right across the country with the Conservatives making the biggest gains in every area of Great Britain and in every section of the electorate.”

Candidates may **disagree** to some extent with this part of the statement and use the following to support:

Source E

- In terms of seats, 2010 was not the worse performance for Labour since 1983 as it achieved fewer seats in 1987 (229) than it did in 2010 (258).

Source F

- Labour did not lose in all parts of the country. Labour actually gained seats in Scotland and so this could not be considered a defeat.
- Labour maintained its position as the dominant party in Scotland with the largest share of the vote and number of seats.
- The Conservatives did not win any extra seats and made only a minimal gain in votes in Scotland.
- Labour did not suffer a comprehensive defeat to the Conservatives in Wales as it remained by a significant margin (over 10% of the vote) the largest party with the largest number of MPs (26 compared to 8 for the Conservatives) though it did lose 6.5% of the vote.

Source G

- Although the Conservatives were the main beneficiaries, both they and Labour lost votes in the 55-64 age group to the Liberal Democrats.
- The Liberal Democrats (+4) recorded the biggest increase in share of the votes in the 18-24 age group and not the Conseratives (+2).

Credit any other relevant points

The evidence supports the view to some extent. The 2010 election result was historically very bad for Labour, but in 1987, it actually won less seats than in 2010. Labour was comprehensively defeated nationally but in Scotland and Wales it was not comprehensively defeated (despite losing seats and votes in Wales). The Conservatives were the biggest gainers in almost all social class, age and gender categories, but not in every single category (ages 18-24 and 55-64).

[END OF MARKING INSTRUCTIONS]